

### **Some Thoughts on this Special Weekend - September 11, 2011**

The older we get the more we understand the reality that both wonderful and tragic things combine to form our existence. Experience teaches us that it is the struggles we endure that make us appreciate the joyous times so much more. Somehow, the bitter taste of tragedy makes the sweet taste of life so much more pronounced. This weekend, we are confronted with a unique moment in time that more than ever illustrates the bittersweet nature of our existence. Over the next 72 hours we will celebrate our school's most exciting weekend while simultaneously remembering the worst attack on our nation's soil. We will experience the joy of our annual Homecoming while at the same time recognizing the 10 year anniversary of the 9/11 tragedy. Tonight, as we get ready to cheer our athletes and support our band at the pep rally, we must remember those families who sent their loved ones off to work on September 11, 2001 and have spent 10 long years since staring at an empty seat at the dinner table and saying "I love you" to a grave stone. In the morning, as our classes march in the parade and proudly display their floats, we have to remember the courage of the men and women who ignored their own safety and rushed towards burning buildings and armed terrorists in the hopes of saving people they had never even met. At 2 p.m. tomorrow afternoon as we cheer the young men who wear our school's uniform and make us proud against East Hampton, we must remember the United States warriors that have shed 10 years worth of blood in the Middle East defending the freedom that we all enjoy. As we go about our day and savor all the wonderful things that our Homecoming weekend has to offer we need to pause for just a moment and remember that our world changed forever on that bright September day. In the blink of an eye, the differences between those who embrace freedom and those who support oppression were made absolutely clear. We must recognize 9/11 by remembering that we have the blessing of families that love us, friends who support us, and a nation that protects us. Nothing we can do will ever reverse the tragic events of 9/11 or provide the very same country that existed before that horrible day. There is simply no question that a piece of our innocence has been lost. The nation is different, we are different, and that is a reality forever etched in stone. What has not changed, however, is the spirit that makes us who we are. The terrorists that thought they could destroy our American energy were terribly mistaken. To know America is to know that steel and bricks and buildings are not the things that make us strong. It is our rock solid belief in community, family, and tradition that forms the fabric of our soul. Homecoming weekend at a place like Harborfields is exactly the American way of life that has endured and survived the ashes of the towers, Pentagon, and Pennsylvania field. So this weekend as we look for ways to remember the anniversary of 9/11, we should take a moment to remember the men and women who lost their lives and to honor the families that were forever changed. We should hug our own families just a little bit longer, tell our friends we appreciate them just a little more often, and throw every ounce of our energy into living a quality life. We can't forget that this life is a privilege and we can honor those who sacrificed on 9/11 by living life with both energy and purpose. I wish you God's blessings as you and your families remember 9/11 in your own way. Always take pride in the fact that each morning we wake up in this wonderful community and continue to live in the greatest nation in the world.